GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5039
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2014
FOREST FIRE
Khanduri AVSM Maj. Gen. (Retd) Bhuwan Chandra

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any investigation by any Independent Agency on the alarming rise of forest fires including in Uttarakhand;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the remedial action taken thereon;

(c) whether pine-tree leaves are a major cause for forest fires in Uttarakhand;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the corrective measures taken in this regard; and

(e) the funds allocated by the Union Government to States for protection of forests from fire, State-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a)&(b) No such study has been conducted in this regard. However, the Forest Survey of India has come out with a report on vulnerability of India's forests to fires.

(c)&(d) Dry needles of Chir pine are usually shed during the months of April/May to June when the weather conditions are dry and hot. Fallen needles are removed by the local people from forest floor for mulch and cattle bedding. Forest fires in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are mainly attributed to anthropogenic factors. Build up of the fallen pine needles on forest floor like any other dry matter is a fire hazard.

(e) Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change provides Grants-in-aid to State/Union Territory (UT) Governments under Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely Intensification of Forest Management Scheme (IFMS) which inter alia has an important component of Forest Fire Control and Management. The aim of the scheme is to supplement the efforts of the States for forest management and protection. Funds under the scheme are inter alia utilized for creation and maintenance of fire lines, patrolling of the forests, establishment of camps, building fire watch towers, forest fire control and strengthening of the forest infrastructure etc. The details of funds released to States/UTs under the Intensification of Forest Management Scheme for protection of forests during the year 2013-14 are given in Annexure.